



Pete Ricketts
Governor

State of Nebraska

Department of Agriculture
Greg Ibach
Director
P.O. Box 94947
Lincoln, NE 68509-4947
(402) 471-2341
Fax: (402) 471-6876
www.nda.nebraska.gov

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Contact: Christin Kamm
(402) 471-6856

IBACH ENCOURAGES COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HERBICIDE APPLICATORS, SPECIALTY CROP PRODUCERS

LINCOLN - As trees and plants green up and soil temperatures rise across the state, farm operations of all sizes and types are getting into full swing of planting season.

Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) Director Greg Ibach is encouraging anyone who will be applying herbicide products during this busy season to be mindful of best management practices and use good communication with their neighbors.

"It's important for our commodity crop farmers and our growing sector of specialty crop farmers to work together so everyone can be successful," Ibach said. "Herbicide applications are critical for corn and soybean production, but there are a number of specialty crops, such as grape vines, that are sensitive to these products."

One way that farmers can open the door of communication is through Driftwatch™. This website is a free, voluntary service that allows those with pesticide sensitive crops, organic crops and beehives to report their locations. Herbicide applicators can review the site to gain an understanding of the locations of specialty crops in their area.

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“For example, Nebraska’s vineyards are currently beginning ‘bud break,” or the official start of the vines’ annual growth cycle, so these plants are extremely vulnerable right now,” Ibach said. “It’s also time for our commodity crop growers to ready their fields for planting, including herbicide applications. Communication between all parties right now is important to ensure successful crop production for everyone.”

Applicators also can register on the Driftwatch™ website, facilitating email notifications to the applicator when a new sensitive crop site is registered in their local area.

The Driftwatch™ website can be found online at <http://www.fieldwatch.com/specialty-crop-registry.html>. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture monitors the Driftwatch™ site for the state. For questions about it, contact Craig Romary with NDA at (402) 471-2351.

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